



Chicomecoatl, The Maize Goddess

Date

ca. 1350-1521

Primary Maker

Aztec

Medium

basalt

Description

This stone sculpture represents Chicomecoatl, the Aztec goddess of maize. Her name means “seven serpent” in Nahuatl, a reference to the day when her festival was celebrated. Within the complex maize iconography of ancient Mesoamerica, images of Chicomecoatl symbolize the ripe maize plant and the general concept of sustenance. This Chicomecoatl figure, with its perfect symmetry and calm or even static expression, is a beautiful example of Aztec sculptural values. The face of the goddess impersonator emerges from an elaborate headdress while she holds two rattles in her hands. Her dress is very simple with only a rope tied at the waist. The figure’s hands and feet are disproportionately large and carved with greater detail than the rest of the body, a common feature of Chicomecoatl representations, which

were often covered in a red pigment associated with the goddess. The highly standardized form and abundance of Chicomecoatl images suggests that they were mass-produced in Aztec times and possibly used in household rituals. (updated 8.31.22 CS)

Dimensions

Overall: 19 5/8 x 7 5/8 x 3 3/8 in. (49.8 x 19.4 x 8.6 cm)